



For Immediate Release

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**STATEMENT OF HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
REGARDING THE STATUS OF AIR FORCE TANKERS**

Washington, D.C. – May 26, 2004 – House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter today issued the following statement regarding the status of aerial refueling tankers for the U.S. Air Force:

“Last week, the House of Representatives approved the 2005 defense authorization bill by a vote of 391-34. This legislation expresses strong bipartisan opposition to further delays in a program to begin replacing the 44-year old tanker fleet with a contract for 100 new Boeing KC-767 aircraft.

“It will take ten years to deliver the first 100 aircraft, and replacing the entire fleet of 544 tankers will take 25 to 30 years. We need to begin this process early in fiscal year 2005.

“I support an analysis of alternatives to determine a cost-effective recapitalization program beyond the first 100 KC-767 aircraft. However, we need to move ahead quickly with the first 100 KC-767s before further jeopardizing our refueling capabilities.

“The tankers are not only vital to our ability to project air power, but also to our industrial base. American-built tankers will bolster the U.S. defense industrial base and, for a program of this magnitude, I see no other option than to have them domestically-manufactured.”

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